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MEMORANDUM

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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

INFORMATION

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July 18, 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: HENRY A. KISSINGER
 FROM: L. S. EAGLEBARGER
 SUBJECT: China Trip

I suspect that you, as I, are somewhat concerned that we have not yet heard from the Chinese on dates for your trip. I suggest that the following, either individually or collectively, may be behind the delay:

1. Brezhnev Visit: Your revelations must have been unnerving, to say the least. In addition to deciding whether you were being honest with them, there is the tougher question of what to do about it. They could, of course, simply decide to let you come to Peking, brief them and then drop the subject. But there must also be some thought about whether to move to something more substantive with the U. S. (as you, yourself, implied in your remarks to Huang Chen). That cannot be an easy decision, particularly if there are still divisions within the leadership. In any event, with a party congress in the offing, this issue must have occasioned some difficult (and time-consuming) debate.

2. Cambodia: Everything I have seen would indicate that Peking would like to get you together with Sihanouk. But PRC flexibility must be constrained by the need to watch Moscow and Hanoi flanks -- particularly if there is any question of Sihanouk's acceptability (or staying power) with the insurgents. Also, in all honesty, the leaks about "secret negotiations", and your possible meeting with Sihanouk, must have put the Chinese on the spot with Hanoi, the insurgents, and Snooky. Peking may well believe it was "had" as part of the internal debate here with the Congress, i. e., the Chinese card was played effectively to obtain authorization to continue the bombing for an additional 45 days.

3. Internal: I am the last to claim any expertise in this area, but given the two issues discussed above, I cannot but wonder whether

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whatever internal accommodations were made to permit the PRC to move toward a new relationship with us may not have been temporarily shaken. There surely must be those who fear too rapid movement; for them, the report on the Brezhnev visit may have looked like an effort to force the pace.

In any event, even if I have overdrawn both the Brezhnev and Cambodian elements of the equation, we need to recognize that Peking (or parts of the leadership) must see your next visit as potentially a new benchmark -- and therefore an event to be approached with caution and thorough airing of views before any decisions are made.

In the final analysis, my bet is that Peking will want you to come soon; the Brezhnev thing must concern them deeply. They will want to hear more about it even if they then decide not to pursue it further. The problem will be Cambodia, where they will have a hell of a time. I simply am unable to come to any real judgment on how they will come out -- either in terms of the degree to which they will pressure Sihanouk, or how successful they will be if they do so. I would guess that they will apply some pressure; I have no guess whatsoever on how successful that pressure will be in getting Sihanouk or some of his people to sit down with you.

There is, I suspect, little we can do to affect either the pace or the content of Peking's reply. Our already weak hand could be weakened further by any sign of anxiety. As I indicated in my earlier memo to you, however, we do have a potential lever in probable Chinese concern over your report on the Brezhnev visit. I still believe it a card worth playing, but only gently, and only with a recognition that it may backfire (in terms of Chinese acquiescence in delaying your visit).*

* On the other hand, if a delay is acceptable (as I think it is if we're to get nothing in Cambodia), then some more time to let the Brezhnev business percolate a bit is no backfire at all.

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